

Quick Strokes

Quick Strokes, Summer, 1974, Volume II, Number 2, Whole Number 4

\$1.25

Likeliest to prevail

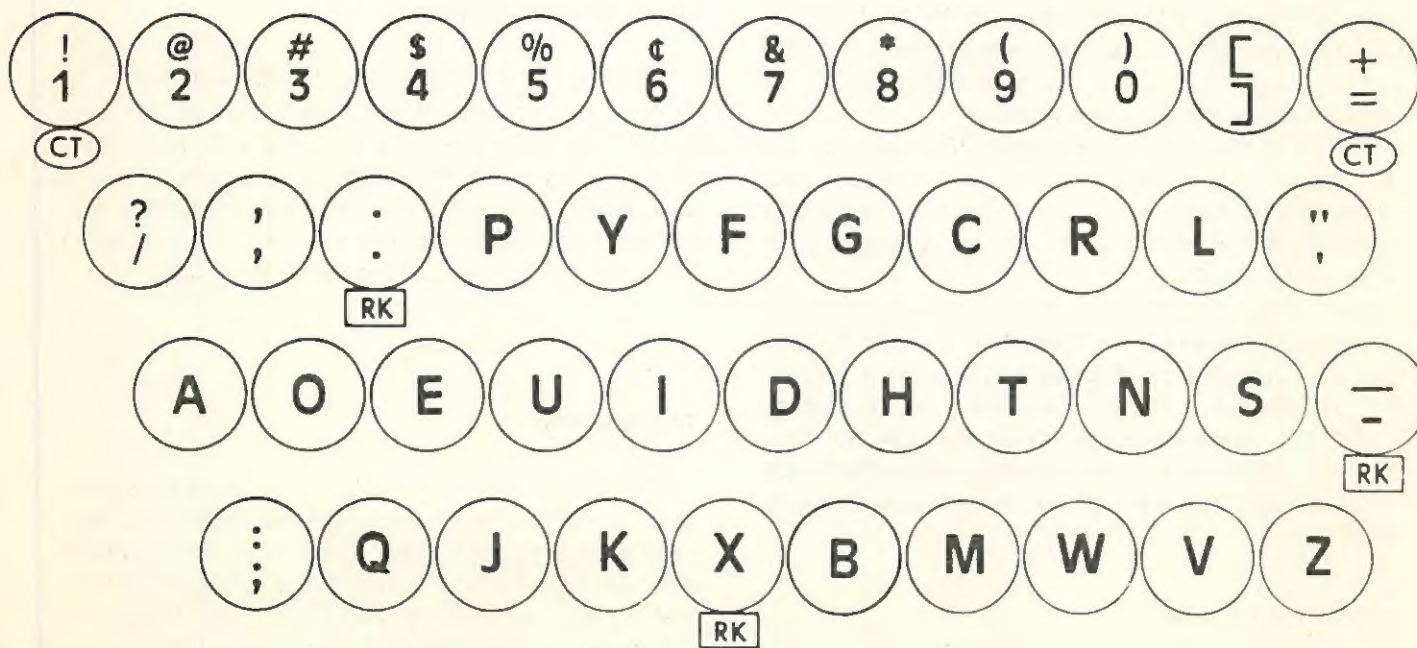
The diagram below shows ASK (for American Simplified Keyboard), which is distinguished from the better-known DSK (Dvorak Simplified Keyboard) by the different locations of /, ?, ', ", underscore, and colon and semicolon. The digits are in traditional order, and the characters that are traditionally paired with them remain paired.

Quick Strokes asserts that it would take statistical analysis to descry any difference in performance between the two variants of the Dvorak arrangement. The same contenders would have won the same championships in the International Typewrit-

ing Tests, Lenore Fenton MacClain would still be the record holder on transcription from recorded dictation, Howard Hudson would still be by far the fastest transcriber who ever took the proficiency test of the Court Reporters' Association, and Barbara Blackburn could still count on a successful defense of her claim to the title of world's fastest secretary, if they had used ASK instead of DSK.

The pairing of look-alikes, in accord with tradition, may, indeed, put brakes on learning, for nontypist ASK beginners, but, again to an extent that only statistical analysis would reveal. For retrainees, already accustomed to these pairs, ASK will not reduce, but instead will in some degree accelerate the pace of learning.

SMITH-CORONA AMERICAN SIMPLIFIED KEYBOARD



CT — CHANGEABLE TYPE

RK — REPEAT KEY

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Is ASK really any better?

Than qwerty—yes—by far! than DSK? From the point of view of the innovator, yes. Any improvement that he offers must pass a review board of some sort, and it is in the nature of review boards to suspect anything drastic. With changes in only three of the four ranks (transverse rows), ASK is less drastic, and yet it contains all the essential advantages of any Dvorak arrangement.

Fair to the inventor?

Yes. The term DSK is tautological, because *Dvorak* and *Simplified* mean the same thing. *Simplified* identifies the arrangement with the inventory just as closely as *Dvorak* does, and, in fact, is preferred by him.

User acceptance

All the large-scale applications of rationalized keyboard arrangements, under way or contemplated, that *Quick Strokes* knows of, conform more closely to ASK than to DSK.

Equipment availability

Office model typewriters with ASK or a closely similar arrangement are available. On special engineering request, IBM will supply its Model C and D type bar typewriters with any arrangement that the customer specifies. SCM offers its Electra 7000, an office model with cassetted ribbon.

An SCM portable, the Electra 2200, with cassetted ribbon and keybutton carriage return, is also available with ASK. Two models, the electric Electra 120 and the manual Classic 12, are available with either ASK or DSK.

On a large enough order, the customer can specify the arrangement on a Simplified element for Selectrics. Enquire from Speedy Keyboard Equipment Co., attention B. Levine, 1133 Grove St., Irvington, N.J. 07111. Unevenness of impression can be overcome by releasing the spring on the damping device on the Selectric into which the Simplified element is mounted.

Conversion for ASK

On type-bar typewriters, conversion is facilitated by choosing an ASK arrangement. The original type slugs can be used without sawing apart the lower-case and shifted characters. Where the method is

that of interchanging key rods or interposers, the arrangement that is arrived at will be the same as ASK except for differences in the character set. Preservation of the traditional pairs will also simplify manufacture of adapters to be strapped into a cable connection.

The Ross Actuator

An inexpensive three-pound keyboard actuator with a Simplified layout that fits on the top of nearly all traditionally arranged alphanumeric keyboards will, according to the patent holder, Lawrence Ross, of 35-20 Leverich St., Jackson Heights, N. Y. 11372, remove operator resistance to acquiring Simplified keyboard skill. The number is 3,805,939. It was issued on April 23, 1974. It can be obtained by sending 50 cents to Patent Office Box 9, Washington, D. C. 20231. Ross quotes, from a McGraw Hill Book Co. source, the figure of five million students trained annually in typing, including one million trained under industry auspices. His point is that if this typing training time were spent on the Simplified arrangement, the saving in time and in educational funding would be tremendous.

Quick Strokes comments

The innovator's cue is to let the schools alone, let them teach fashionable subjects in traditional ways, but show industry that by building simplified character-finding skill on the foundation in button-finding skill which the traditional schools do impart, employers can, indeed, secure the corps of competent keyboard operators that they are crying for.

The rationale

"Drive your operators harder" is not the answer to an output problem on alphanumeric keyboards. The right answer is not to be a driver at all but to retrain your operators on a Simplified arrangement, thus making their work easier and their output higher.

Experience has shown that this is what you accomplish by retraining. The reasons why are in *Quick Strokes* 3, for Spring, 1974, for sale by B. Levine, 1133 Grove St., Irvington, N. J. 07111, at \$1.25 for single copies or \$30 a hundred.

Operator attitudes

Show a Simplified arrangement to an operator, and the comment can be predicted, namely, "I can see that it would be better, but relearning would be hard." In *Quick Strokes* experience, this is the extent of the negativity among operators, and this objection is more apparent than real. Behind the boss's back, the operator either says openly, "Let me at it!" or else says the same thing with the glow in his (her) eyes. The "It would be hard" is a bargaining ploy. The operator wants somebody else to pay for the retraining and for any other costs that may be involved. This is only reasonable, because the improved output will reimburse management many times over for all costs including upgrading.

Simplified operator attitudes

Richard T. Sandberg, P. O. Box 275, Fox Lake, Illinois 60020, writes, "I learned the DSK mainly to make typing less fatiguing. Superfast typing speeds have little interest for me. Long before I learned the DSK, I was able to type on a qwerty keyboard as fast as I can think. This is the maximum speed that is of any practical use to me because practically all my work at a typewriter is original composition. At that speed, however, typing for eight hours a day is fatiguing, even on an electric typewriter. I think the DSK reduces that fatigue."

Mr. Sandberg converted his own typewriter a year and a half ago. See *American Savings and Loan Institute Membership Newsletter*, September, 1973. His typescripts are perfect. He is an author.

Orderly transition

Simplified keyboard arrangement applications of more than one machine and more than one operator:

Lane Williams law office
Box 104, Covina, California 91723
Four operators

Reader's Digest

Pleasantville, N. Y. 10570
Three operators

Speedy Keyboard Enterprises, Inc.
267 Ellis Ave., Irvington, N. J. 07111
Three operators

Order from

B. Levine
1133 Grove St.
Irvington, N. J. 07111

SCM Coronamatic 7000

an office model with cassetted ribbon
and American Simplified keyboard arrangement

Colors: Oyster White and Golden Brown,
Norwegian Gray and Oyster White, Viking
Blue and Oyster White, Silvermist and Black.

Machine	\$383.50
Case	38.00

SCM Coronamatic 2000

electric portable with cassetted ribbon,
button carriage return, and AS arrangement.

Colors: Icelandic White with Aegean Blue,
Coppertone with Oyster White, Norwegian
Gray with Black, and Icelandic White with
Terra Cotta.

\$310.00

For other models with ASK or DSK, for instructional materials, and for DSK typing elements for the Selectric, write or call Mrs. Levine, 201-371-2526

A research center
near Princeton, N. J.
Two operators

Union Mutual Insurance Co.
Portland, Maine
Two operators

A Union Mutual operator, Mrs. Jacqueline Harmon, demonstrated on a Simplified-arrangement typewriter at the nineteenth annual workshop of the National Secretaries Association, at Westbrook College, Portland, on April 6, 1974.

Is this all? No! Watch for announcements.

Conversion

Converted equipment, or new? Call Oscar Koffer, 212-249-0056, Philip Davis, 201-374-9331, Betty Levine, 201-371-2526, or write *Quick Strokes*, 267 Ellis Ave., Irvington, N. J. 07111.

Errata

August Dvorak's retired U.S. Navy rank is captain and not commander.

Captain (then Commander) Dvorak did not conduct the retraining course which is reported in *A Practical Experiment* (Navy Department, 1944), and had no hand in the teaching or reporting.

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